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SUBJECT: NSA HADLEY TALKS TO NATO

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Olson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY/COMMENT: National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley discussed a wide range of strategic issues with NATO Allies on February 21, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, new U.S. efforts to revive the Middle East peace process, and relations with Russia. Mr. Hadley's visit comes as Europe is increasingly seized with uncertainty over U.S. intentions with Iran, doubts over U.S. efforts to revive the peace process, and concerns over perceived rising U.S.-Russia tensions. Mr. Hadley's tour de table with NATO Permanent Representatives gave Allies a chance to peak behind the curtain of U.S. intentions and motivations on almost every major foreign policy issue. END SUMMARY/COMMENT.

AFGHANISTAN: NOT JUST A HUMANITARIAN CAUSE

¶2. (C) Mr. Hadley praised NATO's commitment to the Afghanistan mission, describing it as important and "path-breaking" for the Alliance. We are there, he noted, because we have learned lessons from the last time the world stood back and watched as terrorist training camps were developed and plans were made to attack both the United States and Europe. We cannot walk away this time; we must work to support a stable Afghan government that delivers security and economic development to its people. Afghanistan is not just a humanitarian cause, he stressed, but also a mission to preserve U.S. and European long-term security. For political and economic progress to take hold, however, there needs to be minimum level of security. Security must not be "in lieu of" but rather a "prerequisite for" a political-military strategy. Mr. Hadley reiterated the results of President's review of our Afghanistan strategy and noted U.S. motivations are three-fold: to ensure there are adequate capabilities and resources to achieve the mission; to make clear we are not stepping away from Afghanistan and dumping it on NATO; and to make clear to Allies that now is not the time to step back from their responsibilities just because the U.S. is now doing more.

AFGHANISTAN CONT.: "STEP INTO THE FIGHT, NOT AWAY"

¶3. (C) Mr. Hadley asserted that NATO as an Alliance is going to learn a lot from the Afghanistan mission. NATO is developing new capabilities in Afghanistan that we will need

in the future. Most importantly, these lessons serve as a reminder to us that NATO is a security provider first, and the most effective one at that. This successful tradition, he said, requires us to invest further in our capabilities, articulate our Alliance solidarity, and prepare to "step into the fight, and not away." According to Mr. Hadley, just as important as increased NATO capabilities in Afghanistan is the coordination of our strategic messaging; "we are getting beaten every day by the Taliban" on messaging and he suggested the idea of creating a NATO Strategic Communication Task Force. Mr. Hadley also argued that NATO's strategy in Afghanistan needs to be country-wide; "we cannot Balkanize Afghanistan" and the Alliance must take risks and responsibilities with this in mind.

PAKISTAN: TALIBAN IS THEIR PROBLEM TOO

¶4. (C) In response to Canadian and Romanian questions on how NATO should cooperate with Pakistan to control the growing problems along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, Mr. Hadley said that areas in both Pakistan and Afghanistan are increasingly becoming safehavens for extremists. He emphasized that the U.S. is prepared to work with President Musharraf in the tribal areas (including long-term economic development), but that Pakistani military authorities also need to do more in the short-term (something the U.S. is discussing with them). He stressed that there is also a role for Europe to help promote a long-term solution, and encouraged Allies to articulate to Musharraf that Al Qaeda and the Taliban pose a threat to the Government of Pakistan as well.

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RUSSIA: WE WILL NOT TOLERATE BULLYING

¶5. (C) Russia, missile defense, and Putin's performance at Munich were very much on the mind of Allies; Mr. Hadley received several questions on how the U.S. sees its relationship with Russia, how U.S. missile defense efforts affect that relationship, and how NATO should approach its relations with Russia. Mr. Hadley noted that we need to cooperate with Russia in areas of common interest, such as non-proliferation, Iran and Kosovo. As part of this dialogue, we should speak candidly when we have disagreements; Mr. Putin spoke candidly at Munich, but no European except the NATO Secretary General spoke candidly back to him. Mr. Hadley emphasized that Europe needs to decide on its policy towards Russia and then speak clearly on it; "we can't keep carrying the water" with Russia. The U.S. will not tolerate bullying on the part of Russia and encouraged Allies to make clear they will not tolerate it either.

¶6. (C) On missile defense, Mr. Hadley attempted to clear up any Allied confusion over U.S. intentions, noting that the U.S. is expanding missile defense sites in Europe because the U.S. and Europe must defend ourselves. We will continue to be as open and transparent with the Russian government on our efforts as we have in the past. Mr. Hadley characterized missile defense as a "hedge" against a nuclear Iran, not a threat to Russia. He argued that part of why there is an agreement with North Korea today is because it acknowledged its nuclear threat capability would be marginalized by U.S. missile defense capabilities.

¶7. (C) On Kosovo, Mr. Hadley emphasized that resolution of the issue is of "pre-eminent importance" for the security of Europe. To help achieve a successful resolution, we need to have "quiet bilateral discussions" with Russia. Although agreeing with a UK suggestion that Russia may be acting out in part because it wants to be treated with respect, Mr.

Hadley said the U.S. and the Alliance should treat Russia with respect without accepting its bullying.

THE MIDDLE EAST: A CRUCIBLE AND A CHOICE

¶8. (C) The old Middle East is gone, Mr. Hadley said, and a new Middle East is emerging, the contours of which are still unclear. He described the region as a crucible for a major struggle between forces of moderation and extremism, an underlying dynamic that is playing out in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and in the context of the Middle East peace process. Mr. Hadley urged Allies to make clear which side they are on, especially in the context of Iran.

IRAN: PRESSURE IS NO PRELUDE TO MILITARY ACTION

¶9. (C) Mr. Hadley urged Allies to continue to put pressure on the Government of Iran. He noted Iran will only change course if pressure continues to be placed on the government, and there is evidence that collective pressure is working. Parts of the Iranian government are starting to get the message that Ahmadinejad is not acting on behalf of the best interests of the Iranian people. He said we cannot be forced to accept a nuclear Iran, and U.S.-European solidarity on this issue is needed to ensure this outcome does not occur. Mr. Hadley was quick to assuage some European concerns, however, by noting that U.S. efforts to increase pressure on Iran are not a "prelude to a military option."

MIDDLE EAST PEACE: QUARTET STILL APPLIES

¶10. (C) Mr. Hadley stressed that as the Palestinian unity government emerges, it must accept the agreed principles of the Quartet and the right of Israel to exist. In response to a Spanish request to not "pre-judge" the results of the Mecca deal and the new unity government, he urged Allies to not wait to encourage the Palestinian government to accept the

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Quartet principles. Further, Mr. Hadley said that as the process progresses, we need to find a way to elaborate where the roadmap leads so that Mr. Abbas can rally the Palestinian people behind a positive vision for their future that includes the benefits of a peaceful Palestinian state.

IRAQ: NO BAKER-HAMILTON YET

¶11. (C) Mr. Hadley offered a frank assessment of the situation in Iraq, noting that "we are not at Baker-Hamilton yet" and will not get there unless we can help the Iraqi government establish security in Baghdad. While the world is seeing the military operations side of this new plan right now, Mr. Hadley noted that there is also a diplomatic piece that is not well understood and will soon be better articulated. Turkey raised the only questions on Iraq, specifically over the situation in Kirkuk and the PKK operations out of northern Iraq. On Kirkuk, Mr. Hadley expressed his shared concern over what he termed "one of the hardest issues in Iraq" and said that while he had no solution, it would likely require "time". He commended Turkey's patience on the PKK issue, frankly commenting that the U.S. has not done all it should have done and has hope that General Ralston's process will provide some relief.

LEBANON: ONE MAJOR WORRY

¶12. (C) The resupply of Hizballah across the Syrian border is not being addressed by the Lebanese government or UNIFIL (despite its mandate to do so if Lebanese government gives permission) and Mr. Hadley described this scenario as a "ticking time bomb".

SYRIA: DOESN'T LIKE CARROTS

¶13. (C) Turkey noted that the U.S. needs a "more carrots, less stick" approach to the region, especially in regards to Syria. Mr. Hadley rejected the assumptions that carrots change behavior in the case of Syria, noting that despite continuous effort and a high volume of visits to Damascus by other governments (many in the room) with carrots in hand, no one has gotten anything out of the Syrians. Even more importantly, Mr. Hadley stressed, Syria has faced no consequences for its actions to destabilize the region. There has not been a context where Syria faces positive and negative incentives; any new strategy must aim to change Syria's behavior.

¶14. (SBU) This cable has been coordinated with NSC Staff.
OLSON